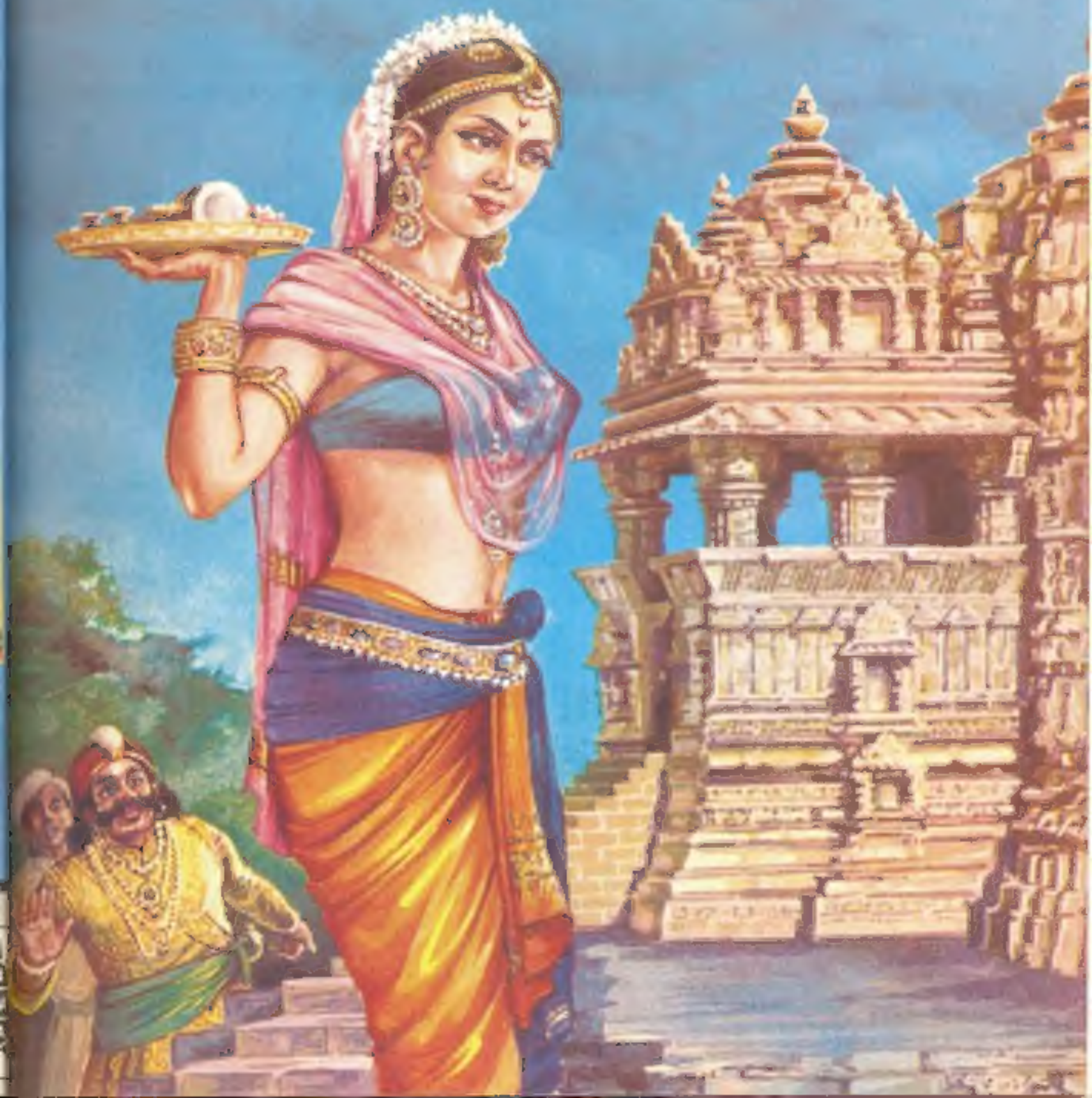


VASANTASENA



Vasantasena

An Adaptation of the Famous
Sanskrit Play, Mrichchakatikam





Illustrated Classics From India

Vasantasena

Adapted from Shudra's Mrichchakatikam

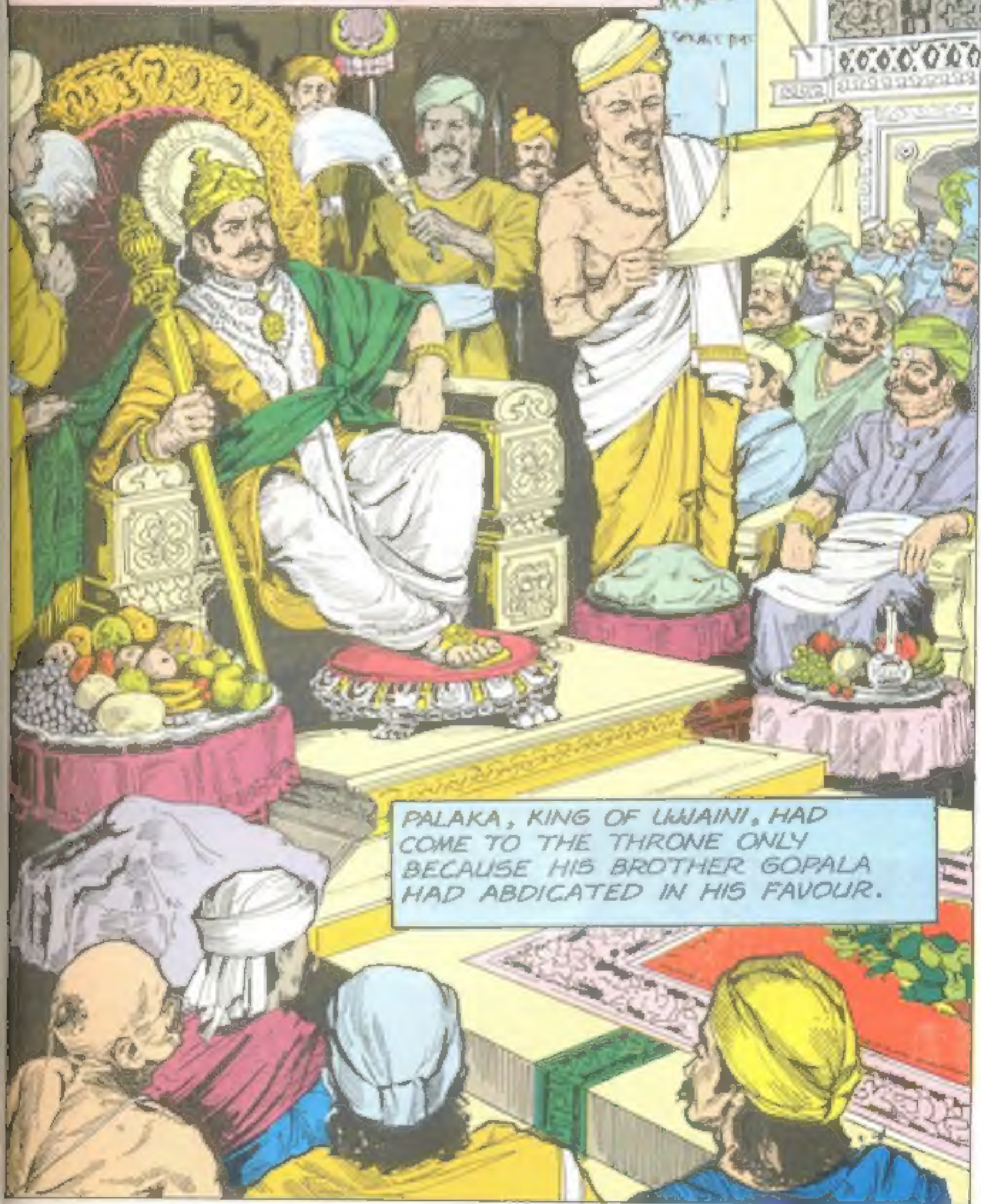
This Amar Chitra Katha has been adapted from Mrichchakatikam by Shudraka, which is regarded as one of the Sanskrit classics. Yet, it is unique in its plot and characterisation. The story tells of a king who is overthrown by a leader of the people. This assumes added significance especially since the author of the play, Shudraka, was a king. The play was written between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD. It is an intriguing story with myriad twists and turns in the plot.

This tale contains a number of romantic and exciting characters like the wealthy and beautiful dancer Vasantasena who loves the noble but impoverished merchant Charudatta, and Vasantasena's faithful slave Madanika who is loved by the brave Sharvilaka, who in turn is involved in the usurped Prince Aryaka's struggle to regain his kingdom.

Mrichchakatikam literally means a "clay cart". It refers to the toy cart that Charudatta's son plays with. The play depicts a sufficiently advanced society. The political theme and secular treatment gives this play contemporary relevance. Vasantasena has been translated into English and French and successfully produced in its English version in the USA.

Script: Kamala Chandrakant Illustrations: G.R. Naik

VASANTASENA



PALAKA, KING OF LIJAINI, HAD COME TO THE THRONE ONLY BECAUSE HIS BROTHER GOPALA HAD ABDICATED IN HIS FAVOUR.

PALAKA WAS A TYRANT. MOST OF HIS SUBJECTS HATED HIM.

SHARVILAKA, PALAKA IS BECOMING MORE RUTHLESS, AND HAS GIVEN A FREE HAND TO HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, THE WICKED SAMSTHANAKA.

NEVER MIND, MY FRIEND BE PATIENT. IT IS PROPHESED THAT ARYAKA, GOPALA'S SON WILL SOON BECOME KING.

SHARVILAKA WAS A LEADER OF ARYAKA'S SUPPORTERS.

WE MUST SEE THAT THE PROPHECY COMES TRUE.

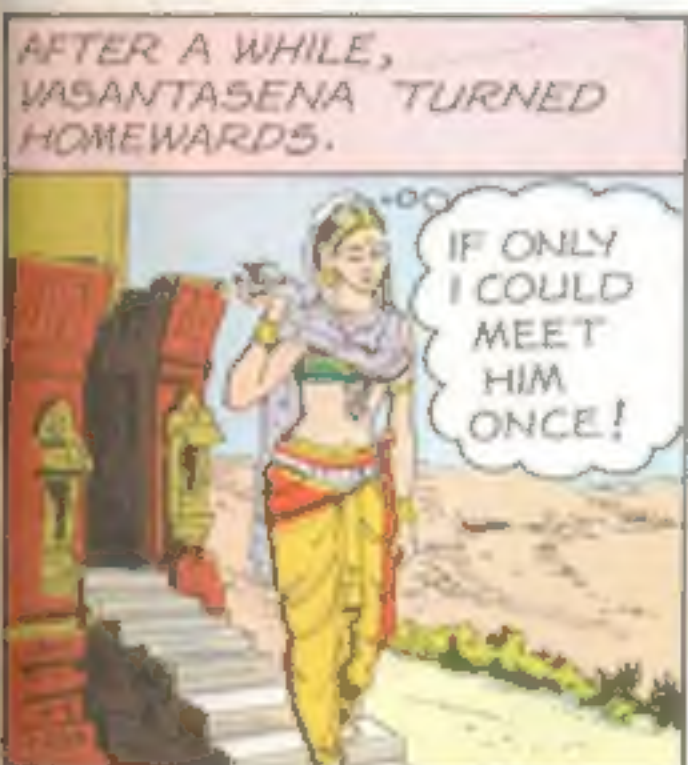
YES, YOU MUST JOIN US AND WORK FOR IT.

IN THAT SAME TOWN LIVED VASANTASENA A BEAUTIFUL, WEALTHY DANCER WHO OFTEN WENT TO THE TEMPLE OF KAMADEVA NEAR BY. ONE DAY -

AH! THERE HE IS AGAIN. THEY SAY HIS NAME IS CHARUDATTA. HOW NOBLE HE LOOKS.



HE WAS ONCE VERY RICH AND HAD MANY FRIENDS. BUT HE LOST ALL HIS WEALTH AND WITH IT HIS FRIENDS. ALL EXCEPT THE LOYAL MAITREYA.



AFTER A WHILE, VASANTASENA TURNED HOMEWARDS.

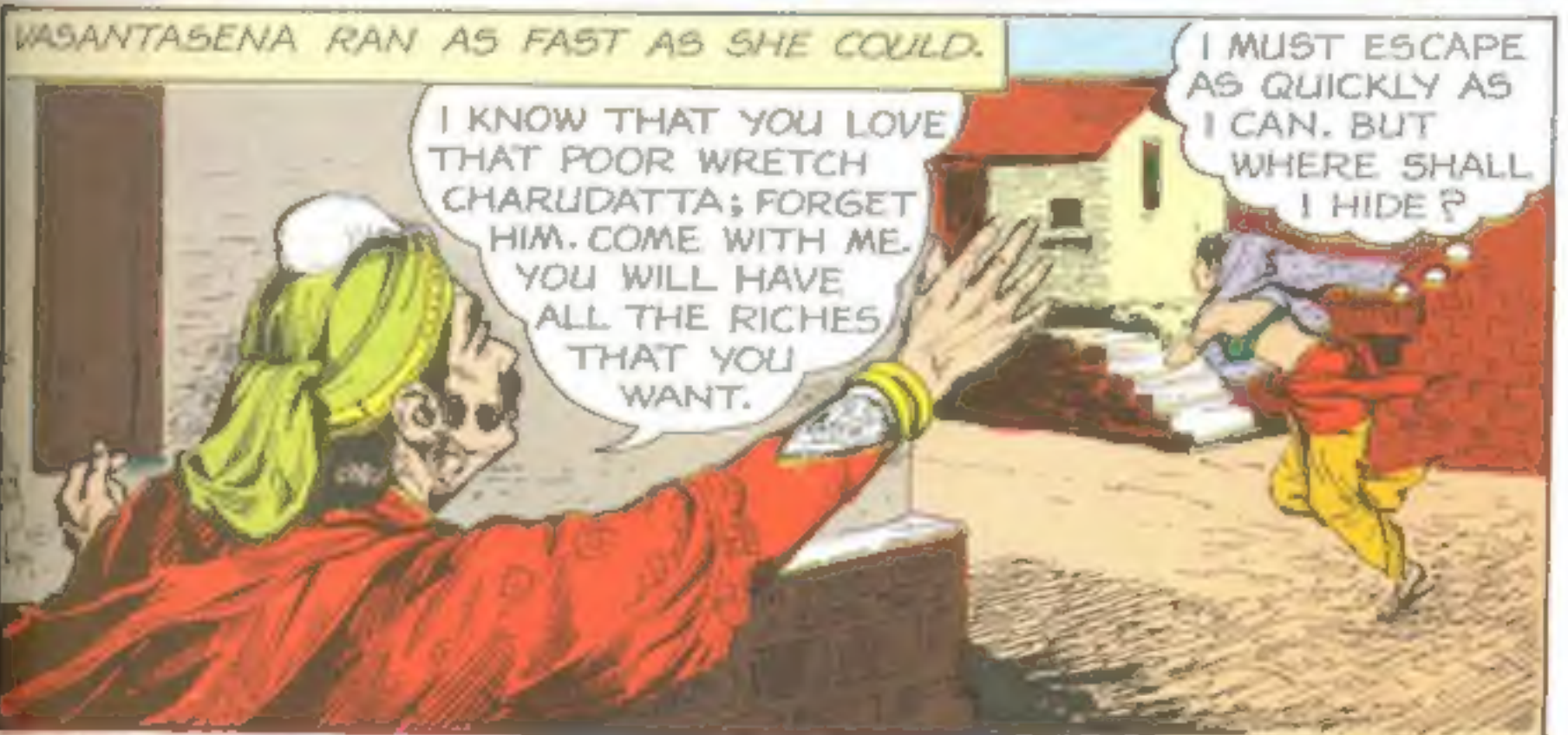
IF ONLY I COULD MEET HIM ONCE!



SUDDENLY—

STOP! VASANTASENA, STOP! DON'T BE AFRAID.

OH! NO! IT IS THE EVIL SAMSTHANAKA. WHAT SHALL I DO? I'M ALL ALONE.



VASANTASENA RAN AS FAST AS SHE COULD.

I KNOW THAT YOU LOVE THAT POOR WRETCH CHARUDATTA; FORGET HIM. COME WITH ME. YOU WILL HAVE ALL THE RICHES THAT YOU WANT.

I MUST ESCAPE AS QUICKLY AS I CAN. BUT WHERE SHALL I HIDE?

SAMSTHANAKA CONTINUED TO CHASE HER.

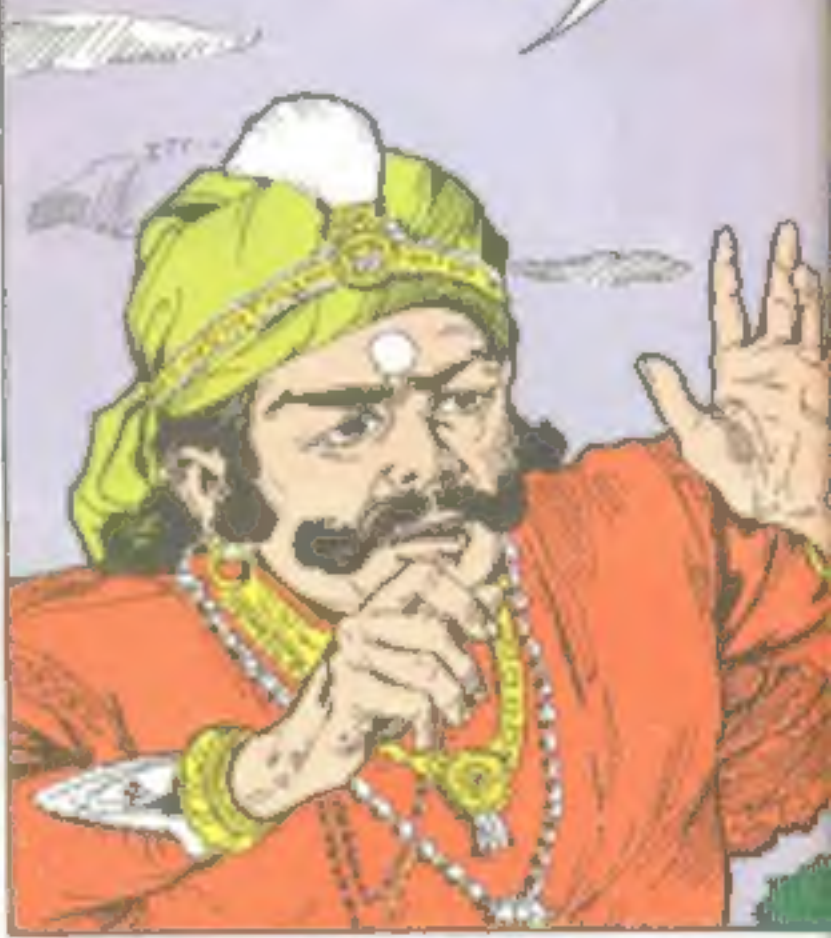
SEE THAT RICKETY GATE. BEYOND IT LIES HIS EVEN MORE WRETCHED HOUSE.

WHAT! CHARUDATTA'S HOUSE! THE EVIL FELLOW HAS SHOWN ME MY REFUGE.



VASANTASENA RAN STRAIGHT IN THROUGH THE GATE.

HEY! WAIT! NOW WHERE DID SHE VANISH?



BUT BY THEN, VASANTASENA HAD ALMOST REACHED THE HOUSE.

MAITREYA, WHO IS THAT BEAUTIFUL WOMAN?

IT IS VASANTASENA. THE WHOLE OF UJJAINI KNOWS THAT SHE IS IN LOVE WITH YOU AND HAS REJECTED THE POWERFUL SAMSTHANAKA.



I AM TOO POOR FOR ALL THAT SHE IS A FINE WOMAN AND IT IS WRONG OF SAMSTHANAKA TO TROUBLE HER WITH HIS ATTENTIONS.

CAREFUL, MY FRIEND. DO YOU WANT TO EARN HIS UNDYING HATRED? AH! THERE SHE COMES.





WHEN THEY REACHED THE GATE OF HER HOUSE -

AH! THERE GOES MADANIKA, MY FAITHFUL SLAVE. THANK YOU, SIRS.

FARE YOU WELL.



ONCE INSIDE, VASANTASENA CONFIDED IN MADANIKA.

NOW THAT YOUR JEWELS ARE IN HIS CARE YOU CAN MEET HIM OFTENER, MY LADY.

THAT HAS OCCURRED TO ME TOO.



HOW WELL I UNDERSTAND MY MISTRESS'S FEELINGS! MY LOVE FOR SHARVILAKA WOULD HAVE MADE ME DO THE SAME. HOW I LONG FOR THE DAY WHEN I MIGHT BECOME HIS WIFE.



MEANWHILE, CHARUDATTA AND MAITREYA WERE RETIRING FOR THE NIGHT.

ARE THE JEWELS SAFE?

YES! RIGHT UNDER MY PILLOW. WE MAY SLEEP IN PEACE.



THAT NIGHT A FIGURE STOLE QUIETLY INTO CHARUDATTA'S GARDEN. IT WAS SHARVILAKA.

PALAKA'S RULE
MAKES ME A THIEF.
MADANIKA, I KNOW
OF NO OTHER WAY
TO BUY YOUR
FREEDOM AND
TO MAKE YOU
MY WIFE.



H.M.M! THIS
HOUSE IS OLD.
THE WALLS ARE
WEAK. IT MAKES
MY TASK EASIER.

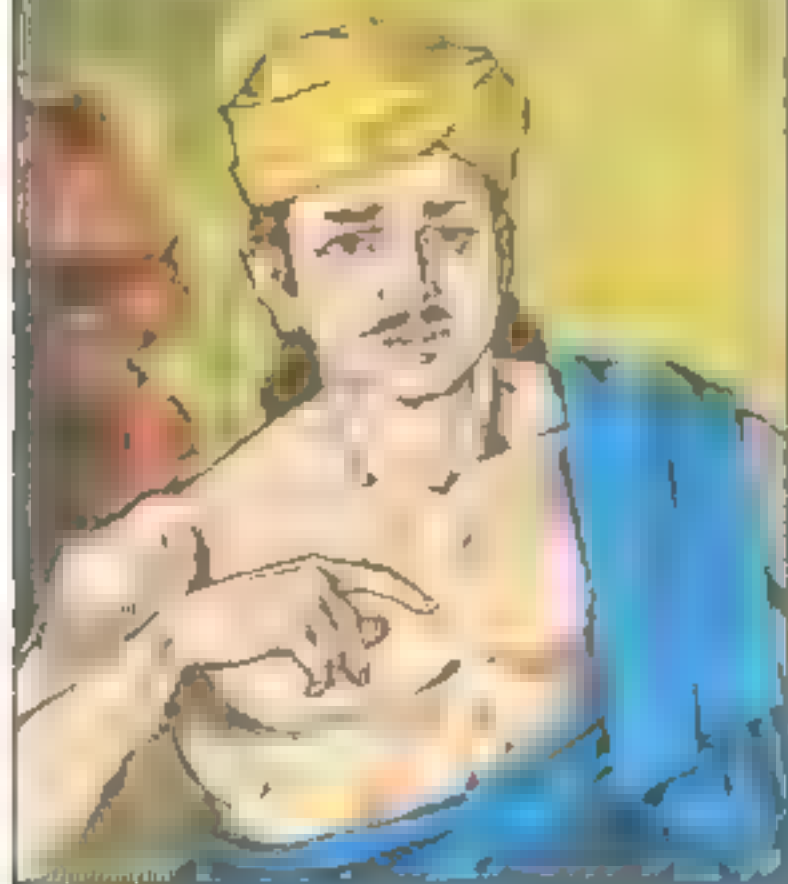


SHARVILAKA ENTERED THE ROOM WHERE CHARUDATTA AND
MAITREYA WERE SLEEPING.

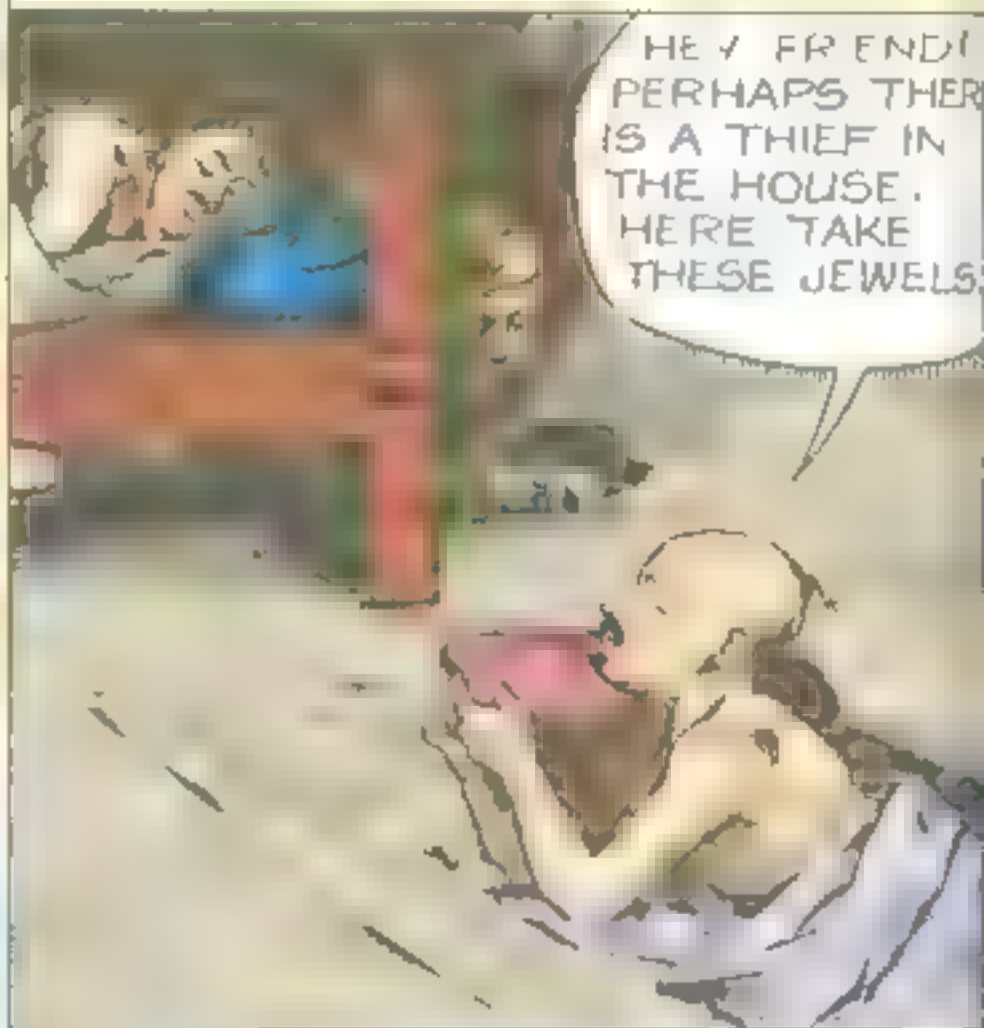
ALL ARE ASLEEP.
BUT THE ROOM IS
BARE. HAS THE RICH
FACADE DECEIVED
ME?



THE MASTER OF
THE HOUSE SEEMS TO
BE A LOVER OF MUSIC
AND DANCING.



JUST THEN MAITREYA, HALF ASLEEP
SAW THE BREACH IN THE WALL.



HEY FRIEND!
PERHAPS THERE
IS A THIEF IN
THE HOUSE.
HERE TAKE
THESE JEWELS.

IN THE LARK MAITREYA MISTOK K
SHARVILAKA FOR CHARULATTA

HATE
WHAT I AM
DOING.



THE THOUGHT OF BEING
ABLE TO BUY MADANIKA'S
FREEDOM STILLED HIS
UNEASY CONSCIENCE

BUT THIS WILL
MAKE MADANIKA
MINE.



JUST THEN A MAID ENTERED THE ROOM.

THANK GOD! IT'S ONLY A WOMAN BUT I'D BETTER ESCAPE BEFORE SHE RAISES AN ALARM.

THIEF! THIEF! MASTER! MASTER, WAKE UP!

MATREYA WAS THE FIRST TO WAKE UP

A THIEF HAS BROKEN INTO THE HOUSE. HE HAS ESCAPED.

WHAT ARE YOU SHOUTING FOR?

HO! HO! HO! HOW DISAPPOINTED. HE MUST HAVE... THE JEWELS! WHERE ARE THE JEWELS? CHAKUDATTA, GET UP!

MATREYA WAS A NEW WOMAN

CHAKUDATTA WHERE ARE THE JEWELS I GAVE YOU?

WAS A NEW WOMAN
WHO HAD
MARRIED
WITH HIM

ALAS! THEY
HAVE BEEN
STOLEN.

O RELENTLESS FATE!
SO FAR SHE HAD ONLY
DEPRIVED ME OF MY
WEALTH. NOW SHE
ATTACKS MY VERY
HONOUR.

I CANNOT BEAR
THE DISTRESS OF
MY GOOD MASTER.
I MUST GO AND
TELL MY MISTRESS.



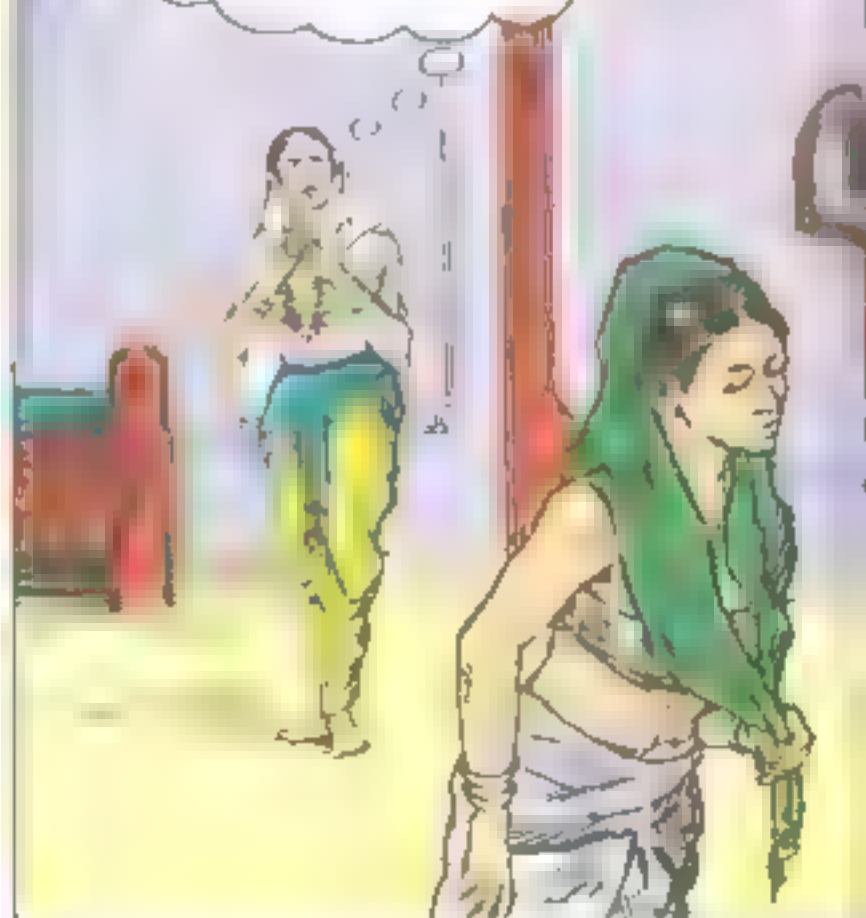
AFTER THE MAID HAD TOLD
HER THE WHOLE STORY...

ALAS! ALL UJJAINI WILL
SAY THAT MY HUSBAND,
BECAUSE OF HIS POVERTY,
HAS KEPT THE JEWELS
FOR HIMSELF AND....

SEND MAITREYA
TO ME



ALL THAT I HAVE
IS MY INVALUABLE
PEARL NECKLACE. THE
ONE MY MOTHER GAVE
ME. IT WILL REDEEM
MY HUSBAND'S
HONOUR AND
MORE.



WHEN MAITREYA CAME—

MAITREYA, TAKE THESE PEARLS AND PRESERVE MY HUSBAND'S HONOUR. BE DISCREET. RESPECT HIS SENTIMENTS.

I SHALL.

WHAT A NOBLE WOMAN!

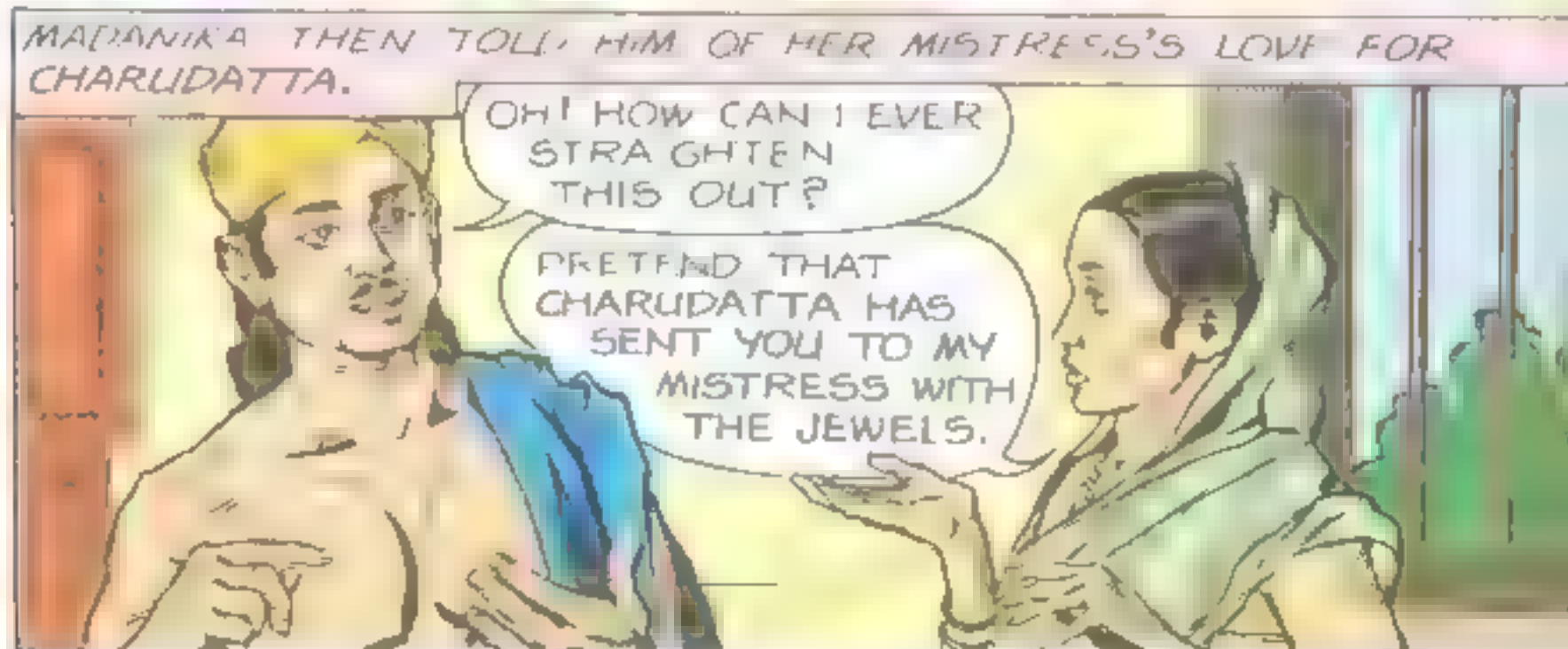
MAITREYA TOOK THE PEARLS TO CHARUDATTA

TAKE THIS, FROM A DEVOTED WIFE.

I AM INDEED A RICH MAN. I HAVE A LOVING WIFE, A LOYAL FRIEND, AND MY HONOUR, WHICH A POOR MAN CAN SELDOM KEEP.

MAITREYA, GO TOMORROW MORNING AND GIVE THIS NECKLACE TO VASANTASENA.

MEANWHILE EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, SHARVILAKA WENT TO MADANIKA

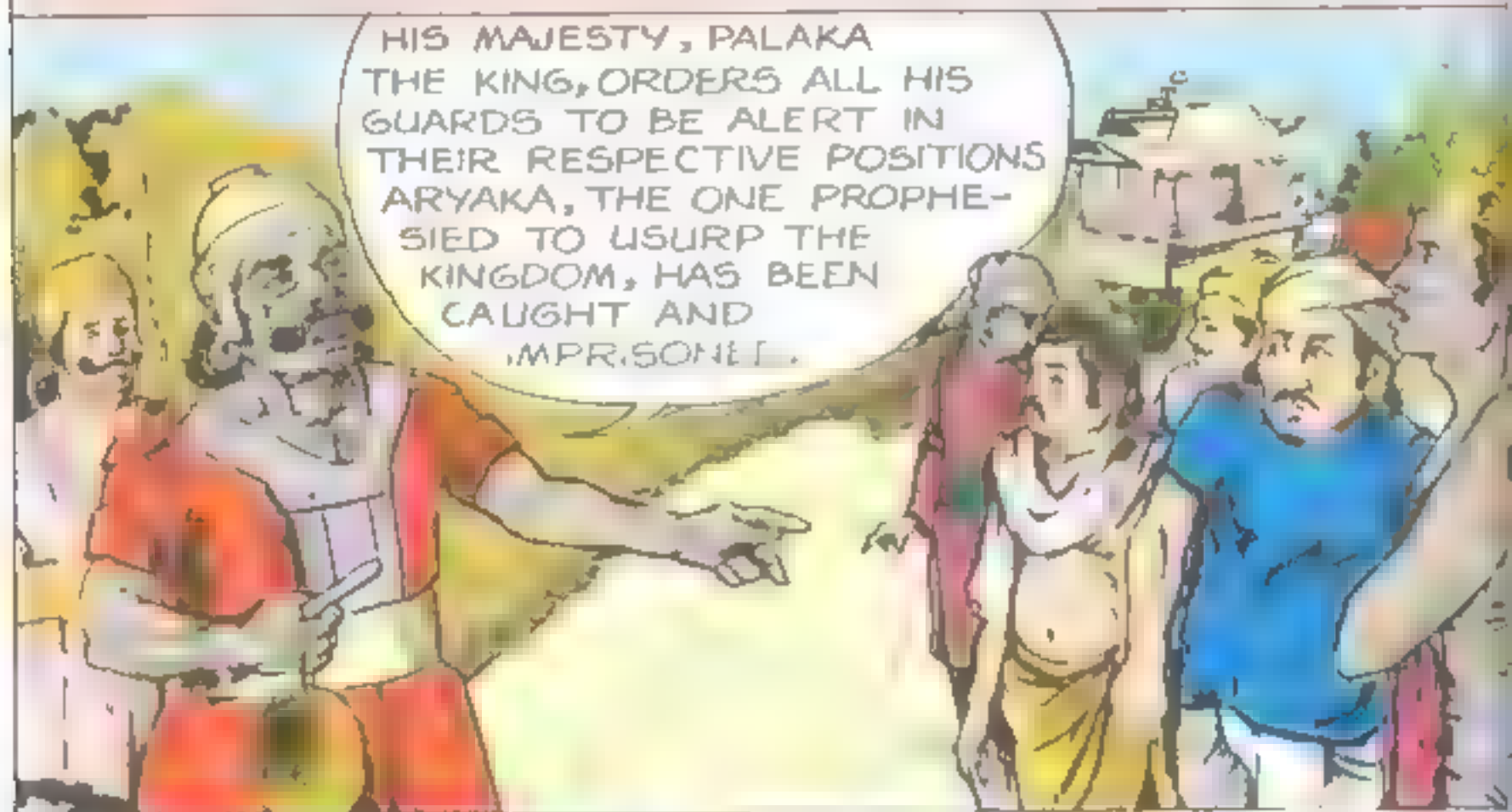




SHAKVILAKA, NOT KNOWING THAT VASANTASENA HAD OVERHEARD THE CONVERSATION, DID EXACTLY AS MADANIKA ADVISED.



AS SHARVILAKA AND MADANIKA RODE ALONG, THE KING'S HERALD WAS OUT ON THE STREETS MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT.



DEAR ONE, I SHALL
INSTRUCT THE DRIVER
TO TAKE YOU TO THE
HOUSE OF A FRIEND.
WAIT THERE FOR
ME TILL I JOIN
YOU

I SHALL DO
AS YOU WISH,
MY LORD. BUT
PLEASE BE
CAREFUL.



WHEN THE CARRIAGE DROVE AWAY WITH MADANIKA

I SHALL CALL FOR
A REVOLUTION
I SHALL GATHER ALL
THE MEN WHO HAVE
SUFFERED AT THE
HANDS OF THE
KING.

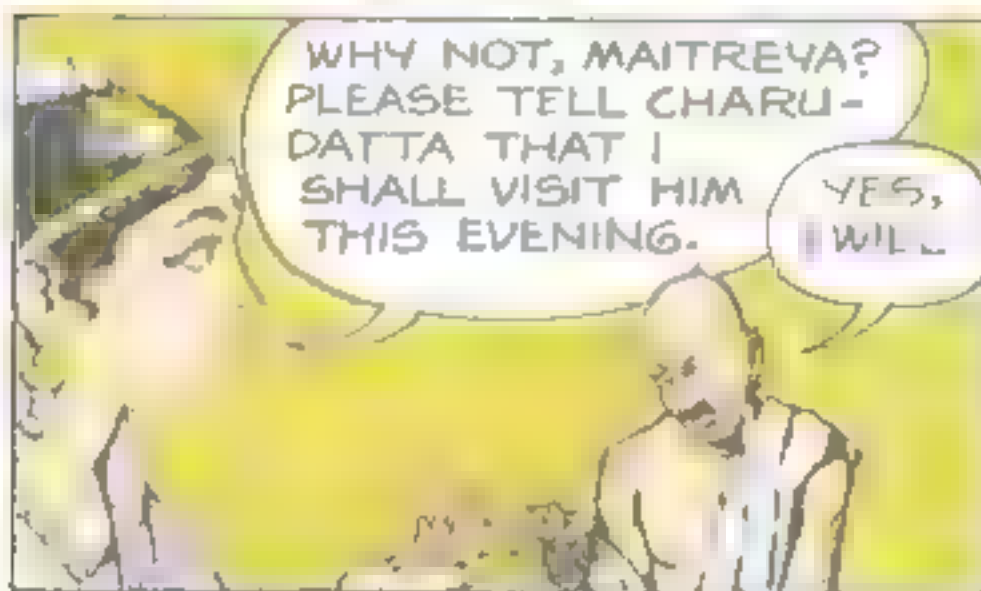
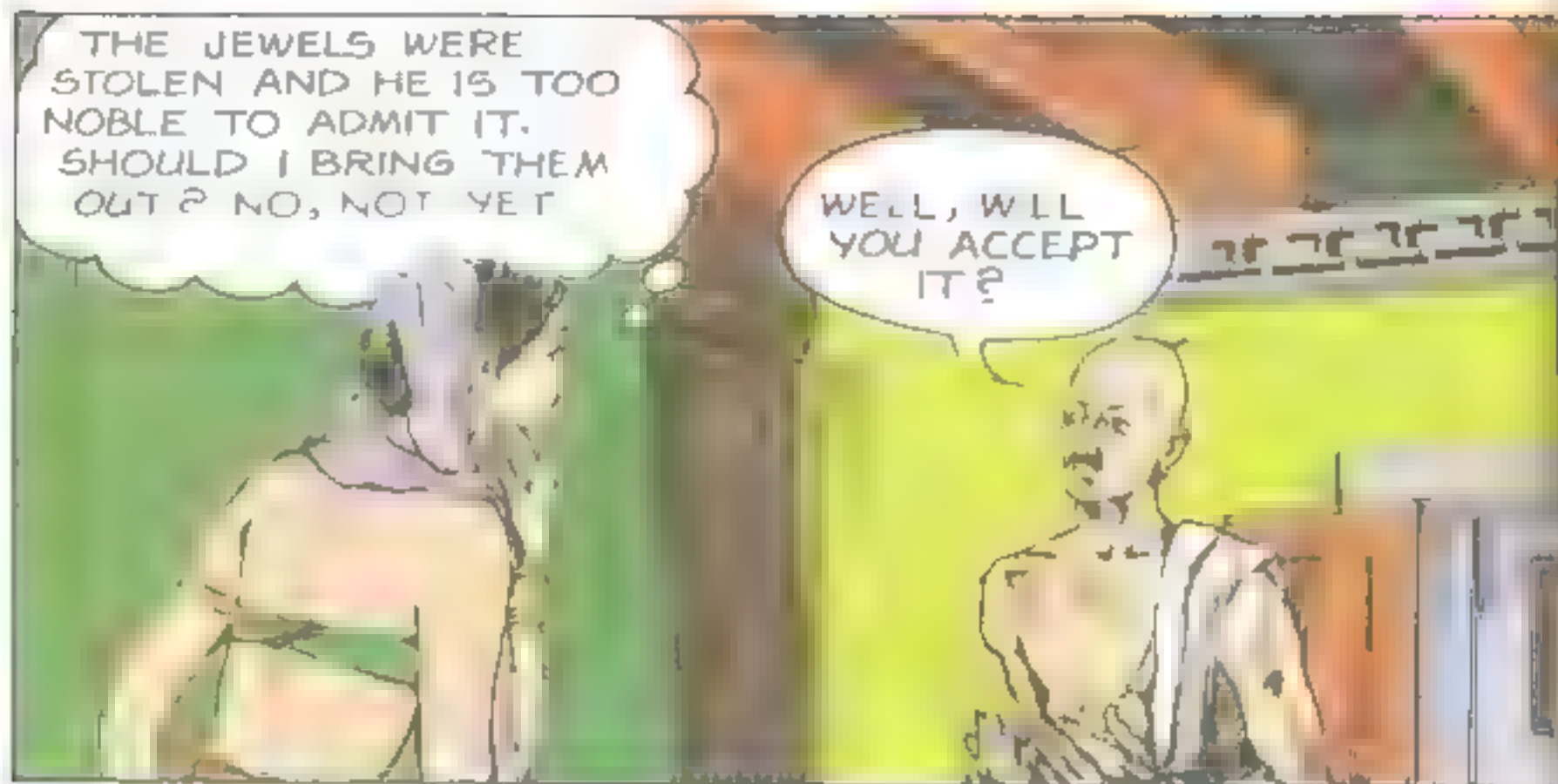


HARDLY HAD SHAKVILAKA AND MADANIKA LEFT, WHEN
MAITREYA CAME TO VASANTASENA

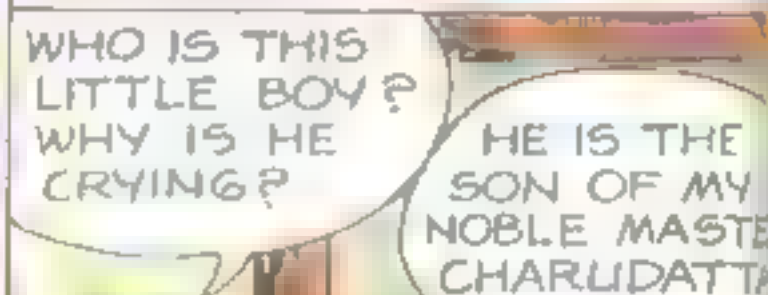
AH!
MAITREYA,
WELCOME
IS MY
LORD
WELL?

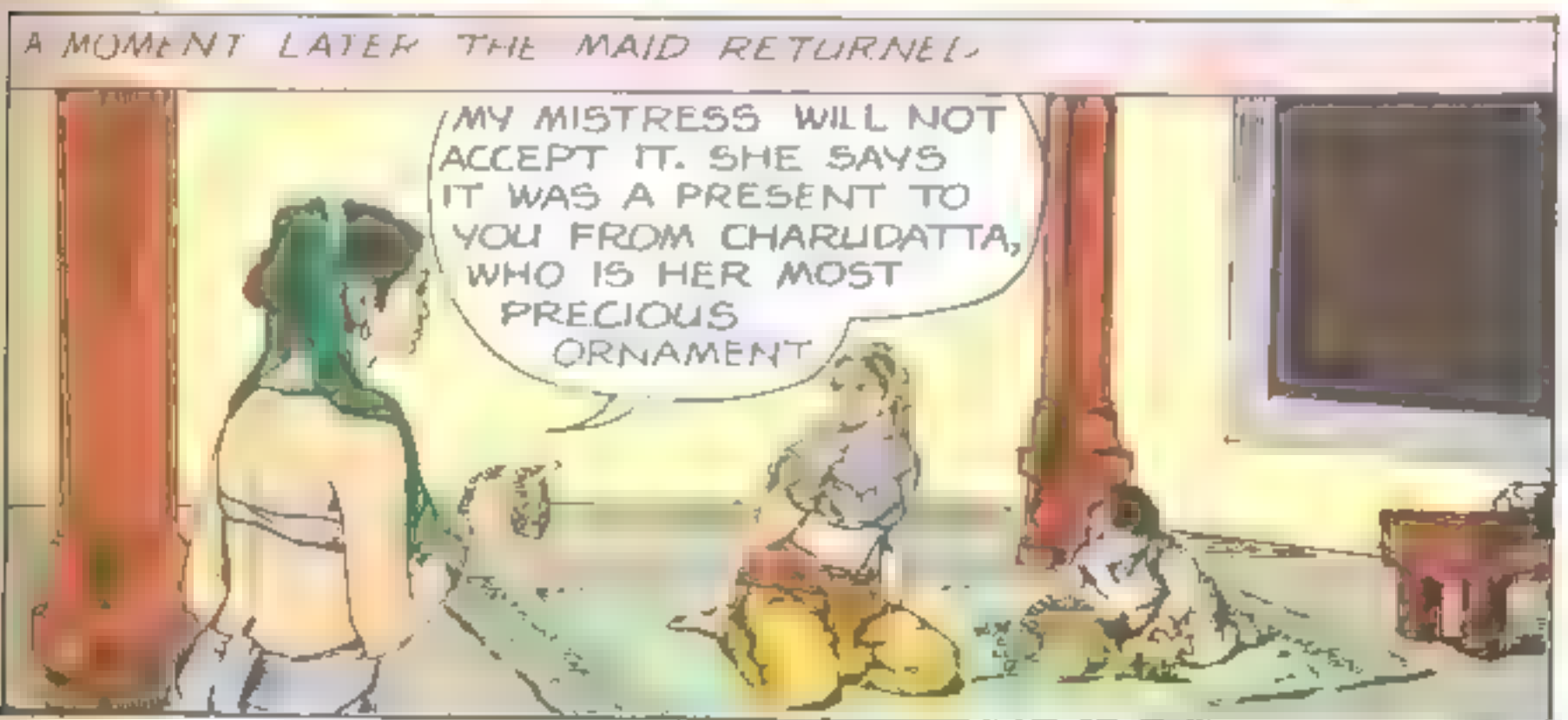
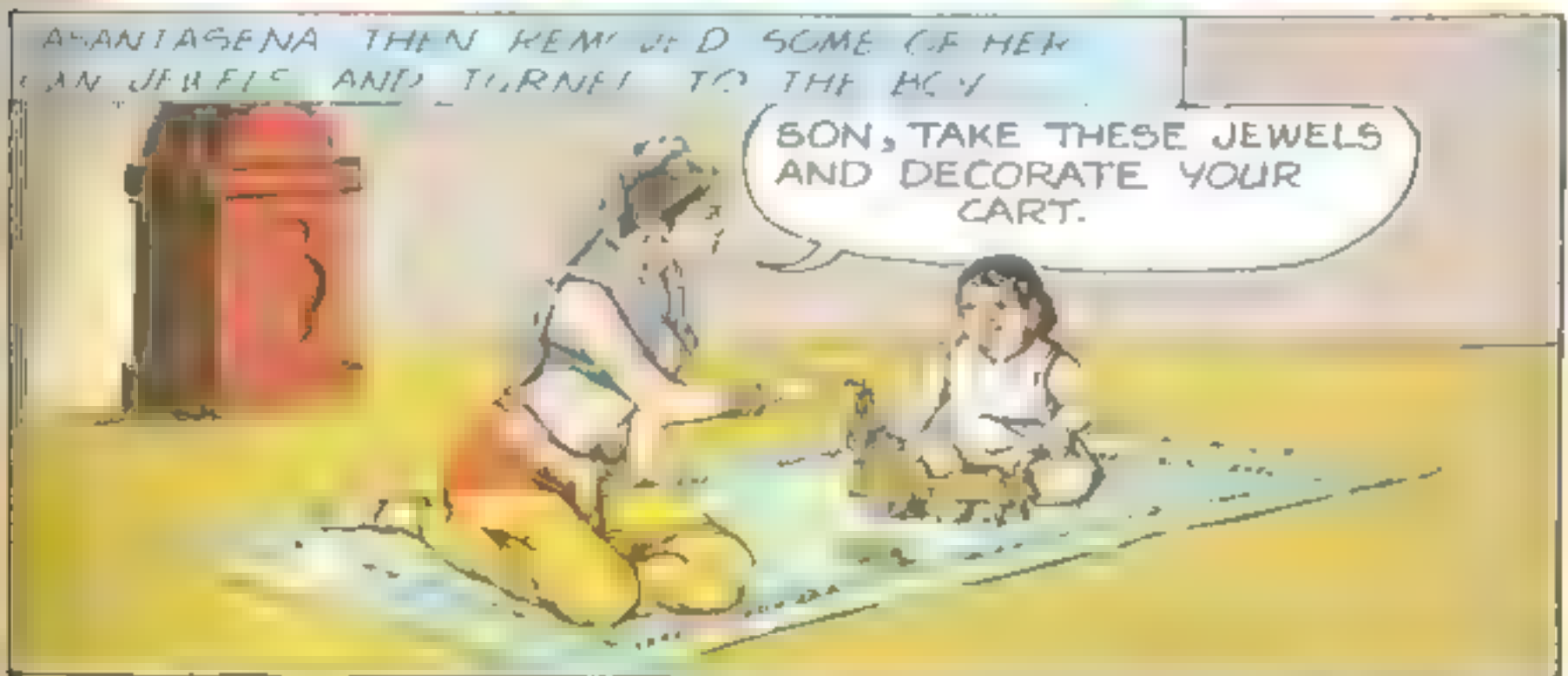
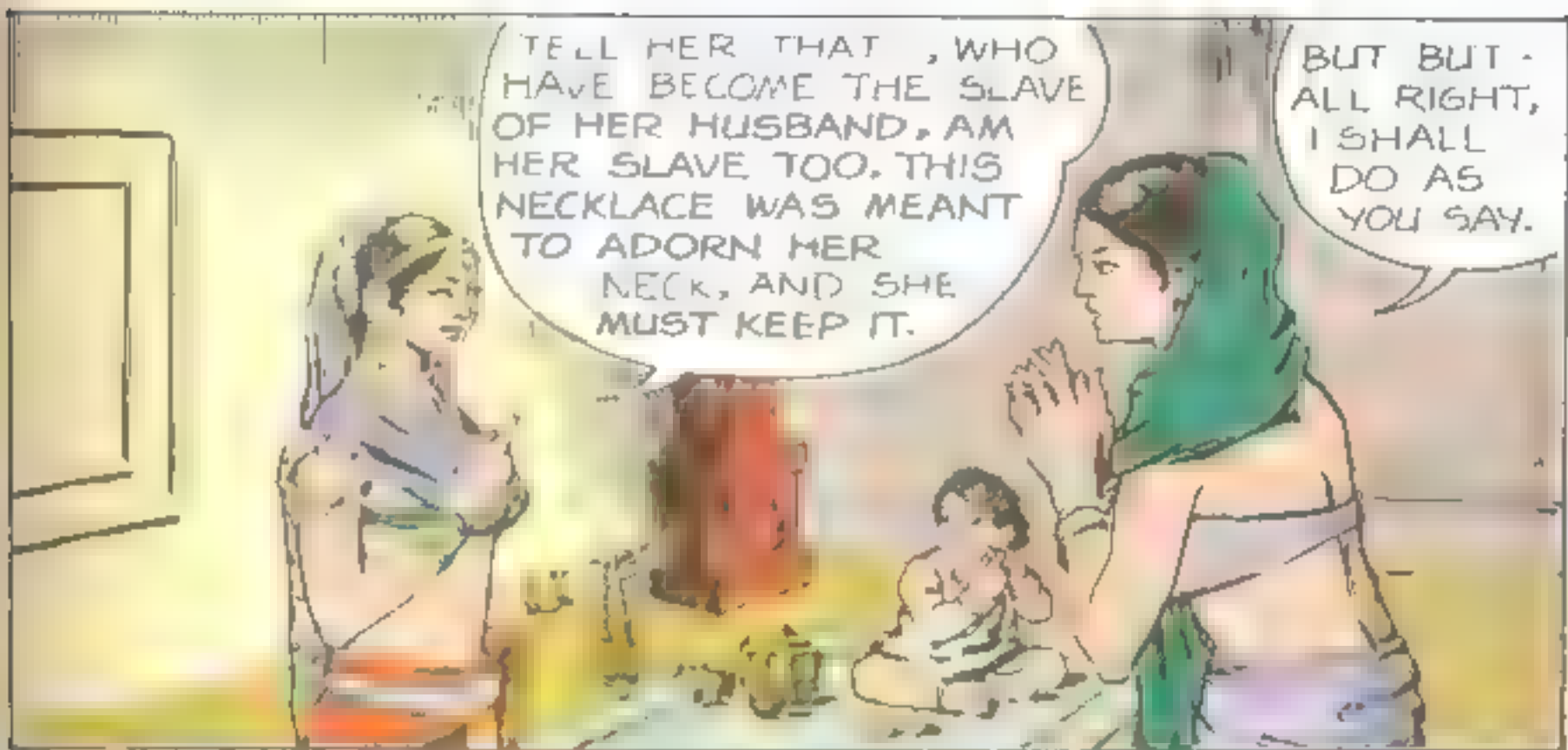
HE IS WELL. HE
HAS MISPLACED
YOUR JEWELS
AND BEGS YOU
TO ACCEPT THIS
PEARL NECKLACE
INSTEAD.





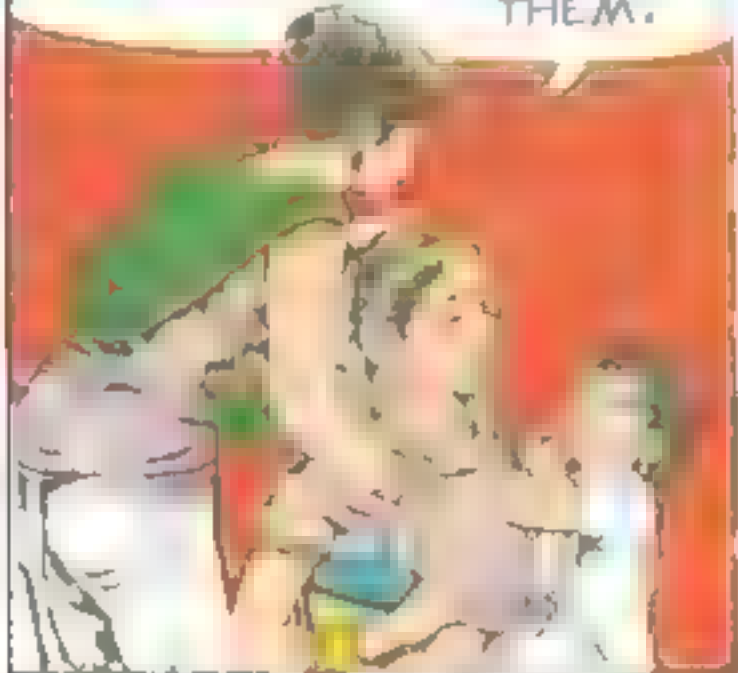
THAT EVENING VASANTASEN WENT TO CHARUDATTA'S HOUSE.



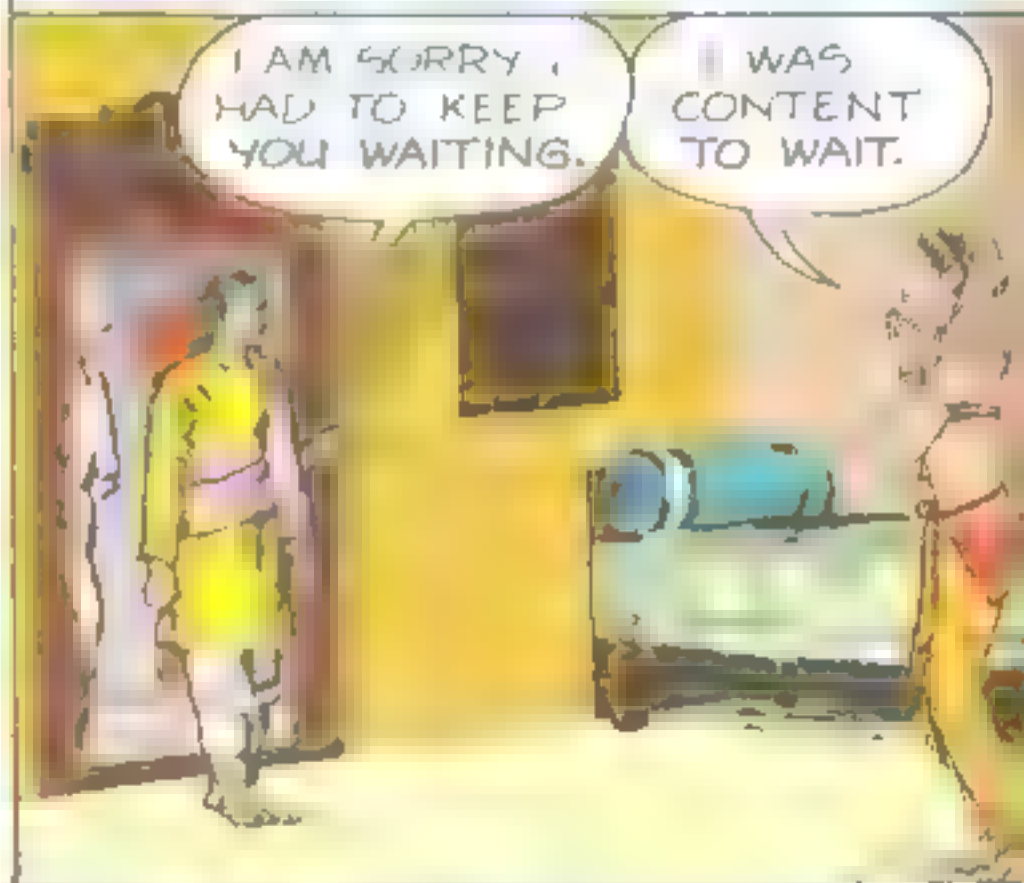


SHE THEN TURNED TO
THE CHILD

COME, MY SON, LET US GO
AND PLAY. MAMAM, I'LL
BRING YOUR JEWELS TO
YOU WHEN HE TIRES OF
THEM.



A FEW MINUTES LATER CHARUDATTA
ENTERED THE ROOM.



I AM SORRY,
HAD TO KEEP
YOU WAITING.

I WAS
CONTENT
TO WAIT.

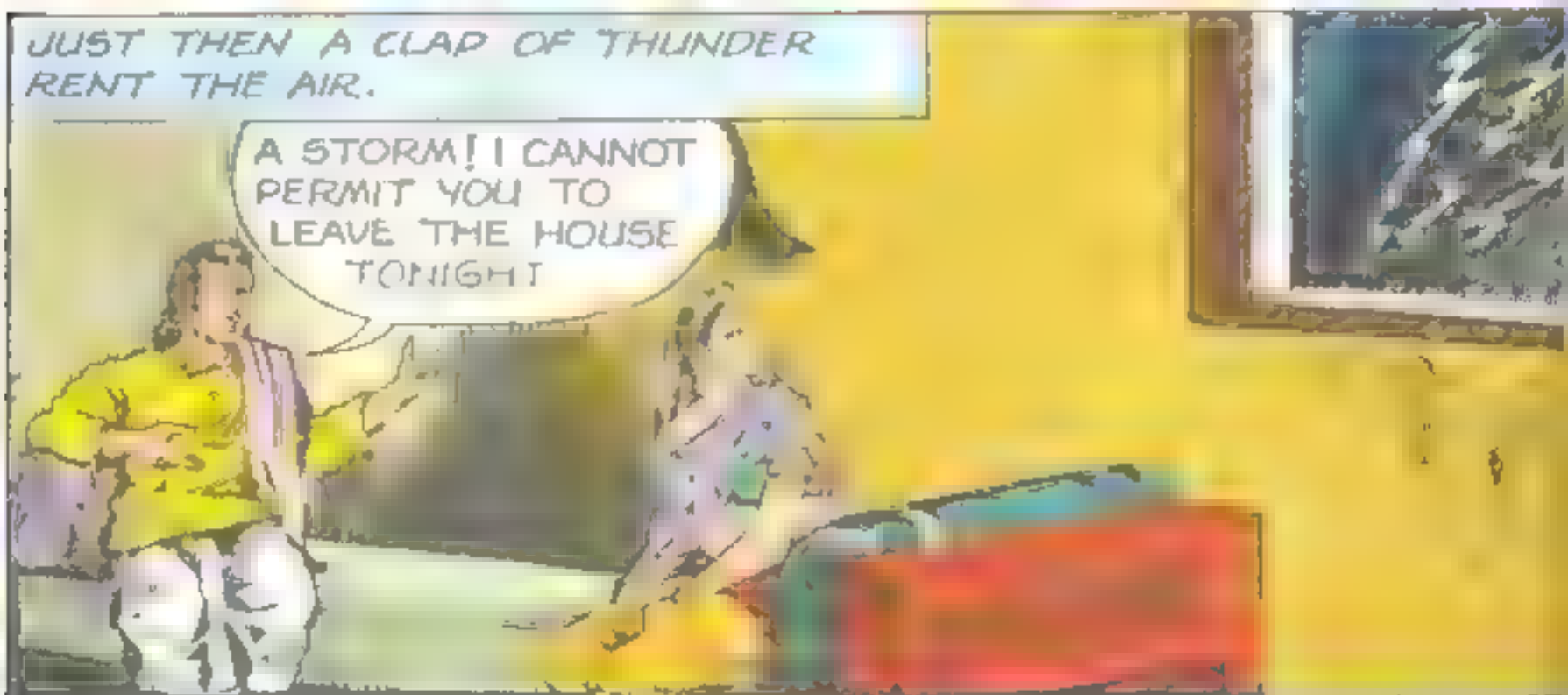
NOBEL CHARUDATTA,
YOU SHOULD NOT
HAVE SENT THE
PEARL NECKLACE
TO ONE AS
UNWORTHY
AS I.

MY BELOVED
VASANTASENA!



JUST THEN A CLAP OF THUNDER
RENT THE AIR.

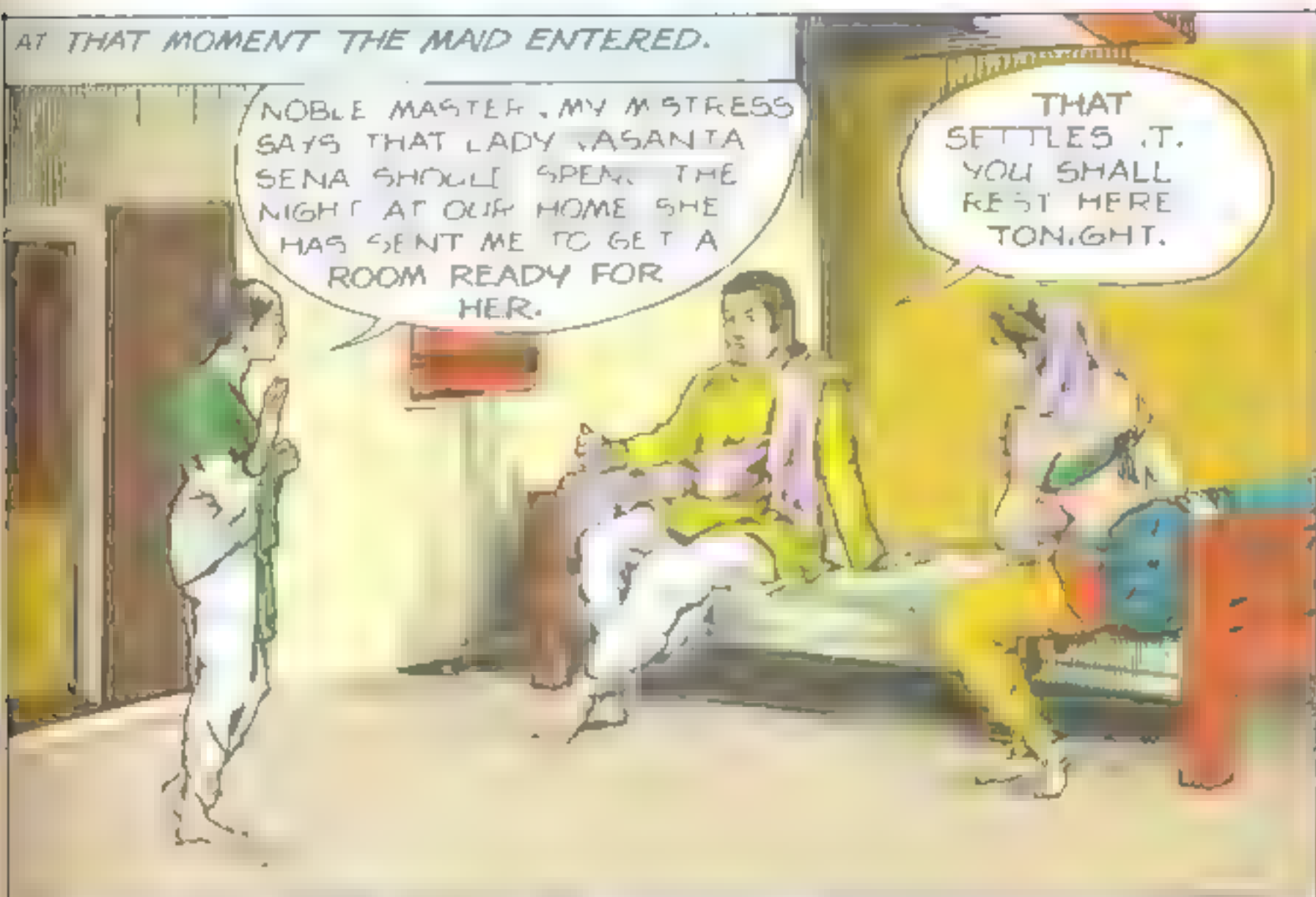
A STORM! I CANNOT
PERMIT YOU TO
LEAVE THE HOUSE
TONIGHT



AT THAT MOMENT THE MAID ENTERED.

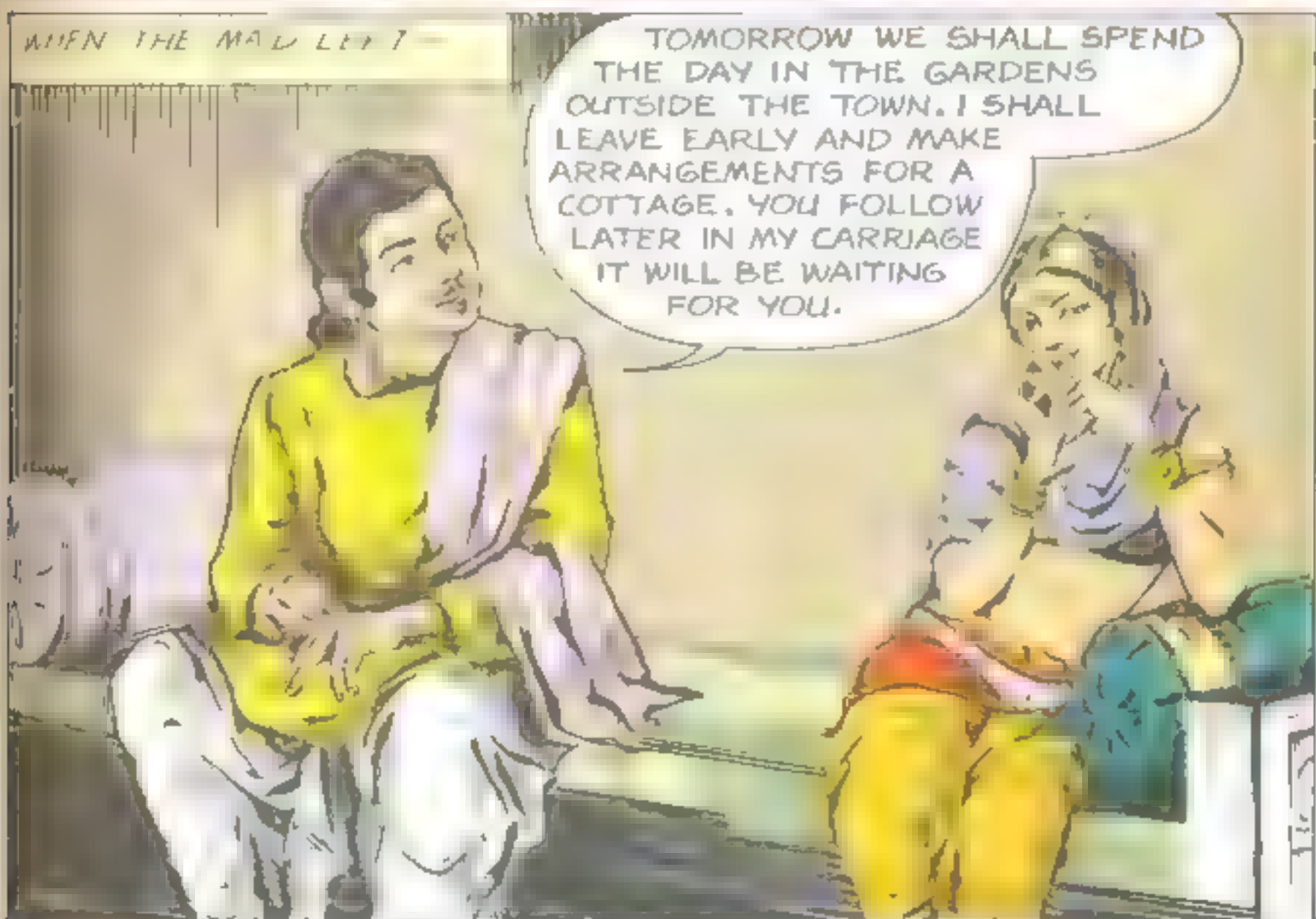
NOBLE MASTER, MY MISTRESS
SAYS THAT LADY VASANTA
SENA SHOULD SPEND THE
NIGHT AT OUR HOME SHE
HAS SENT ME TO GET A
ROOM READY FOR
HER.

THAT
SETTLES IT.
YOU SHALL
REST HERE
TONIGHT.



WHEN THE MAID LEFT —

TOMORROW WE SHALL SPEND
THE DAY IN THE GARDENS
OUTSIDE THE TOWN. I SHALL
LEAVE EARLY AND MAKE
ARRANGEMENTS FOR A
COTTAGE. YOU FOLLOW
LATER IN MY CARRIAGE
IT WILL BE WAITING
FOR YOU.

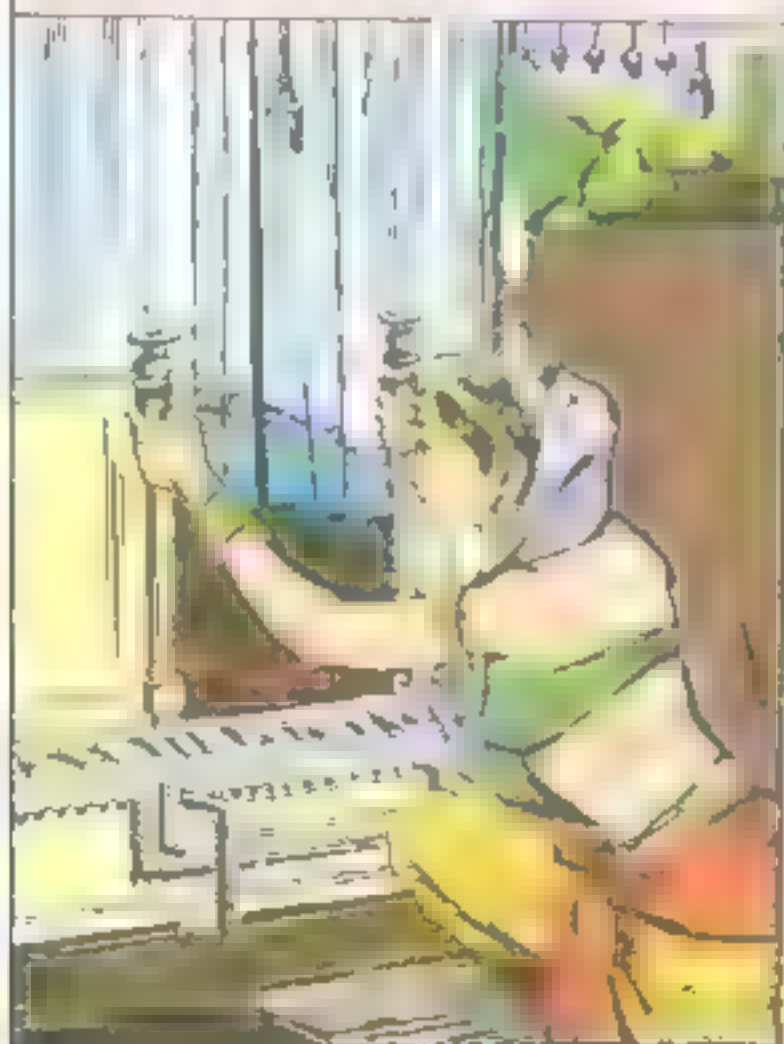


THE NEXT MORNING --

I AM READY
MUCH EARLIER THAN
EXPECTED. AH! THERE'S
THE CARRIAGE,
WAITING FOR ME.



MISTAKEN IT FOR
CHANDRATTA'S CARRIAGE,
SHE GOT IN.



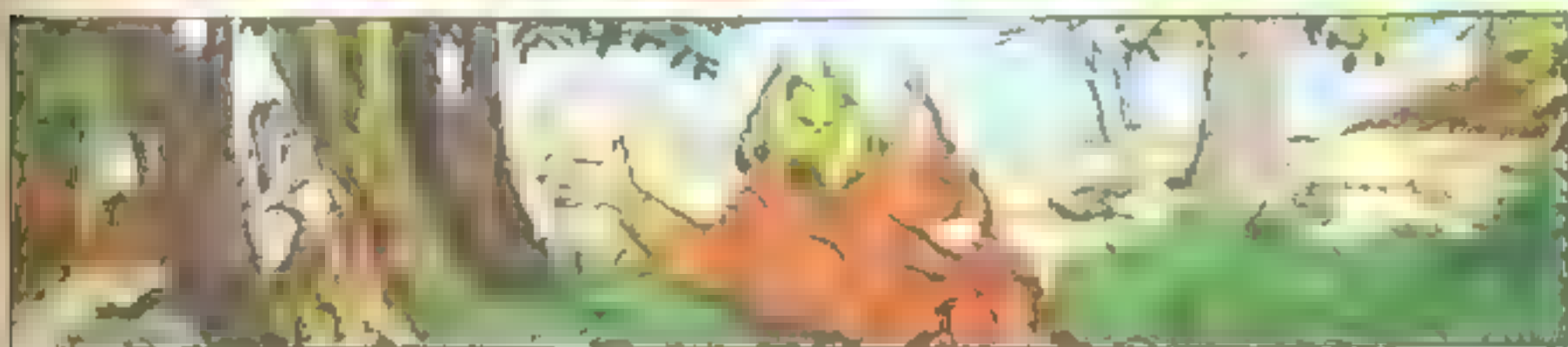
WHEN THE CARRIAGE ARRIVED
AT THE FIELD ...



.. TO VASANTASENA'S DISMAY, IT WAS NOT CHARUDATTA BUT SAMSTHANAKA WHOM SHE SAW.

ALAS! I GOT INTO THE WRONG CARRIAGE.

VASANTASENA! YOU! SO YOU DID COME TO ME. AND IN MY OWN CARRIAGE!



COME, MY DEAR. WE SHALL SHARE ALL THE PLEASURES THE PARK CAN OFFER US.

LET ME GO YOU EVIL ONE. IT IS NOT YOU I SEEK BUT THE NOBLE CHARUDATTA

SAMSTHANAKA WAS VERY ANGRY WHEN HE HEARD THE NAME OF HIS RIVAL.

YOU SHALL DIE FOR THIS, YOU BEAUTIFUL CREATURE!

HELP!
HELP!

SAMSTHANAKA TRIED TO STRANGLE VASANTASENA AND, BELIEVING HER TO BE DEAD, RODE OFF IN HIS CARRIAGE.



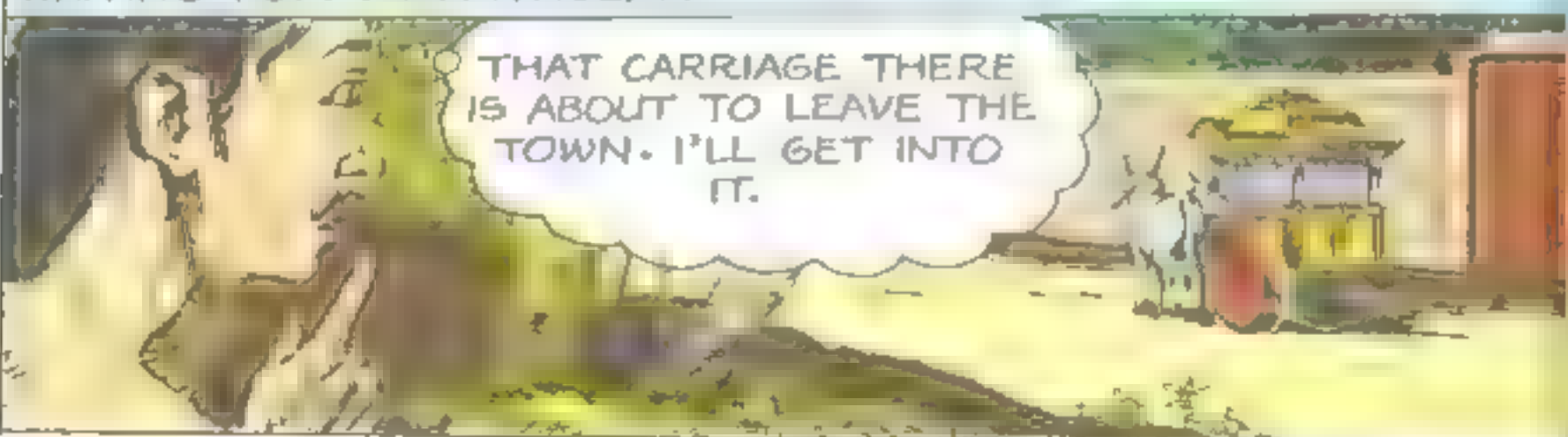
MEANWHILE AKYAKA HAD ESCAPED FROM PRISON

THANKS TO SHARVILAKA, I HAVE ESCAPED. BUT WHERE CAN I GO NOW? I AM AN OUTLAW!



JUST THEN HE SAW CHARUDATTA'S CARRIAGE WHICH WAS WAITING FOR VASANTASENA.

THAT CARRIAGE THERE IS ABOUT TO LEAVE THE TOWN. I'LL GET INTO IT.



THE DRIVER MISTOOK THE CLANKING OF ARYAKA'S CHAINS FOR THE TINKLE OF JASANTASENA'S ANKLETS.

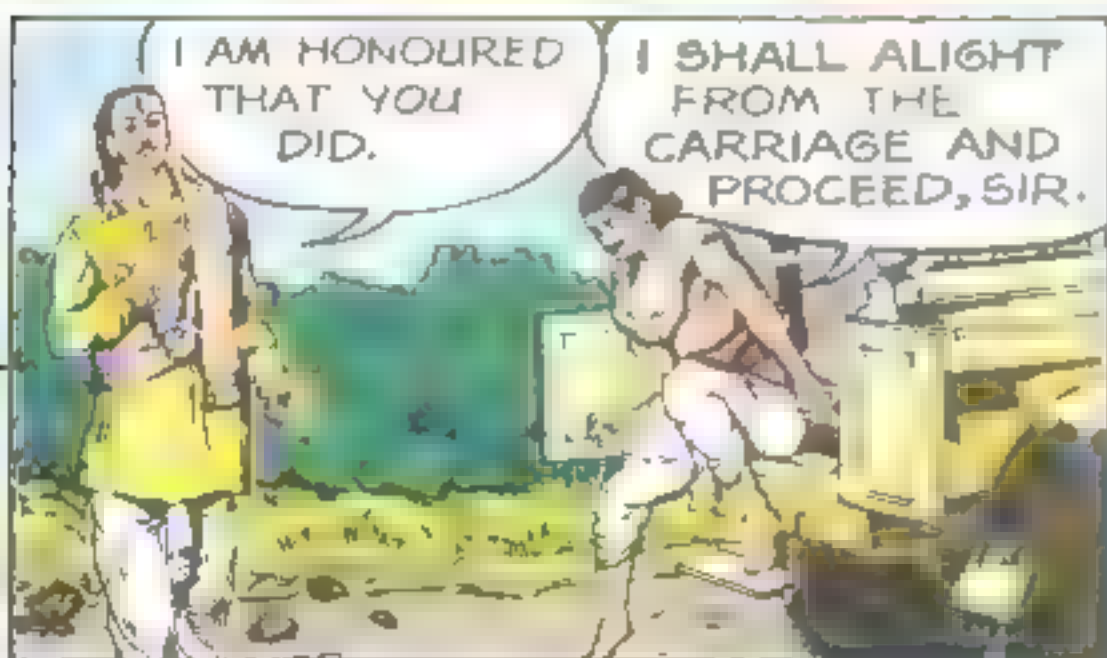
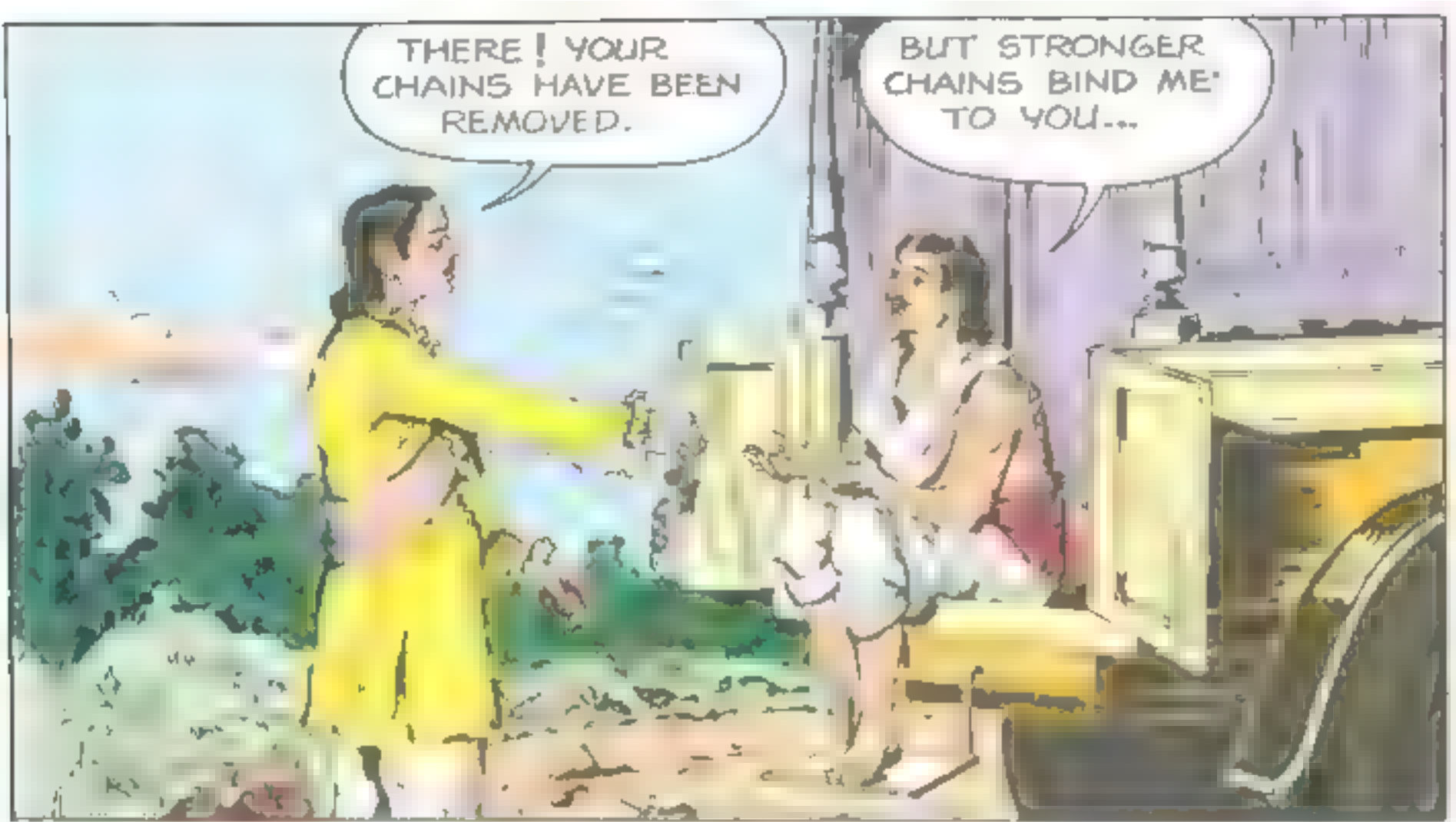


HER ANKLETS ARE QUIET. THE LADY MUST HAVE SETTLED DOWN. I SHALL DRIVE ON.



WHEN THE CARRIAGE ARRIVED AT THE PARK, THE DRIVER (CHARUJATTA) STEPPED FORWARD TO HELP HIS LADY-LIKE GUEST OUT.





AFTER ARYAKA HAD LEFT —

WHY HAS VASANTA-
SENA NOT COME?
I AM ANXIOUS. I'D
BETTER RETURN
HOME AND SEE.

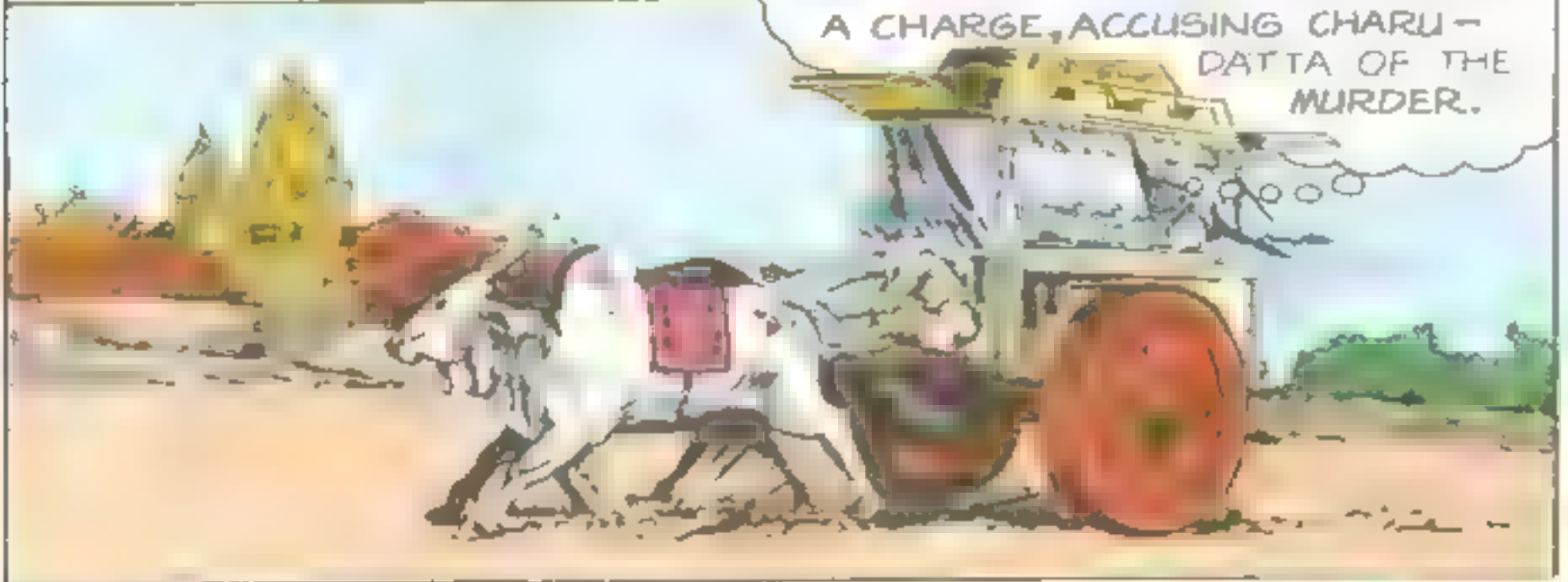
HOURS AFTER
SAMSTHANAKA HAD
ABSAULTED
VASANTASENA, A
MONK PASSING
THAT WAY SAW HER

WHAT'S THIS? A
MURDER! NO. THANK
GOD. SHE IS STILL
ALIVE.

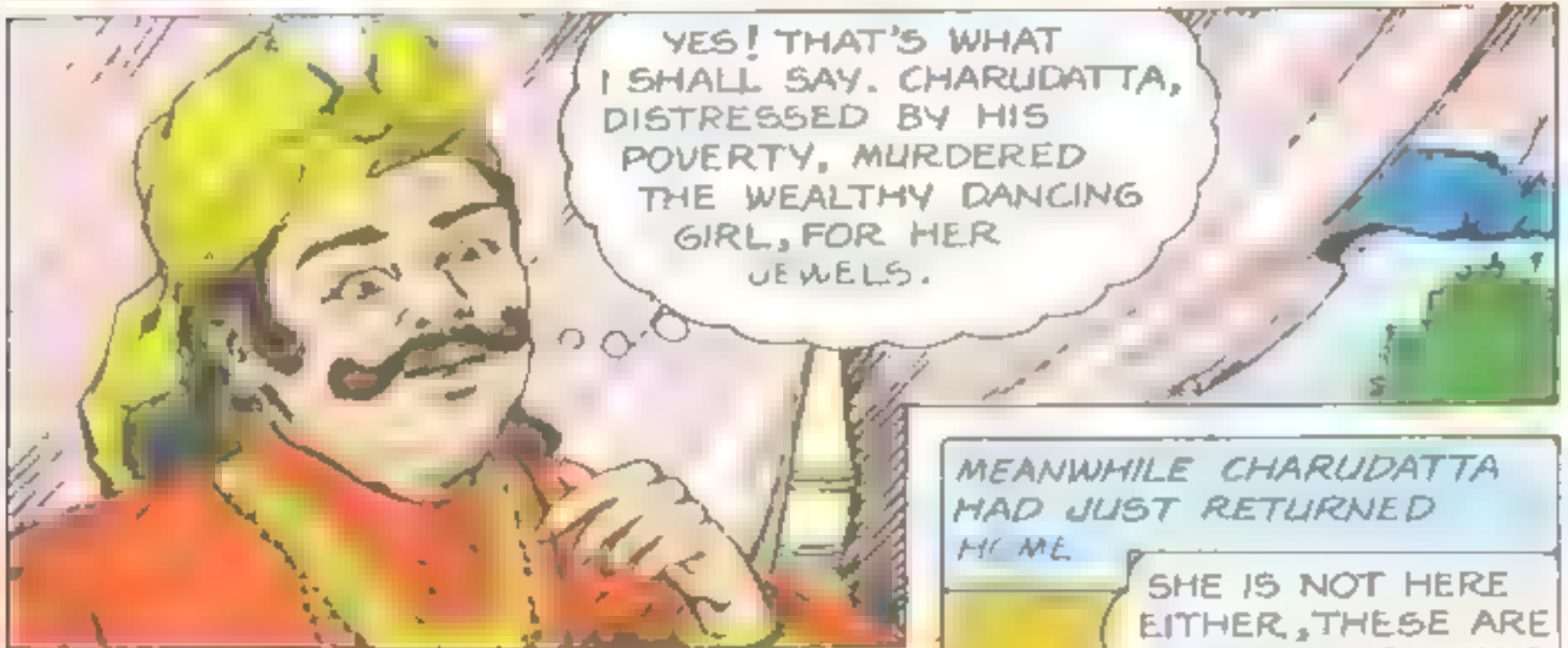
WHY, IT IS
VASANTASENA.
I SHALL TAKE
HER HOME.

SAMSTHANAKA MEANWHILE WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIS DEED

I HAVE MURDERED VASANTASENA TO SAVE MY SKIN, I'D BETTER GO TO THE COURT AND PRESENT A CHARGE, ACCUSING CHARUDATTA OF THE MURDER.



YES! THAT'S WHAT I SHALL SAY. CHARUDATTA, DISTRESSED BY HIS POVERTY, MURDERED THE WEALTHY DANCING GIRL, FOR HER JEWELS.



MEANWHILE CHARUDATTA HAD JUST RETURNED HOME

SHE IS NOT HERE EITHER, THESE ARE HER JEWELS. WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN MY SON'S TOY CLAY CART?



AT THE COURT AFTER SAMSTHANAKA HAD LODGED HIS CHARGE

CLERK, GO TO CHARUDATTA AND SERVE HIM WITH THIS SUMMONS. HE MUST PRESENT HIMSELF AT THE COURT FORTHWITH.



HE SENT FOR MAITREYA.

TAKE THESE JEWELS BACK TO
VASANTASENA. SHE MUST
HAVE GIVEN THEM TO THE
CHILD TO PLAY WITH AND
FORGOTTEN
ABOUT THEM

I WILL
GO RIGHT
AWAY,
SIR.

WHEN MAITREYA
HAD LEFT -

I HOPE
MAITREYA
FINDS HER
AT HOME.

JUST THEN THE CLERK ENTERED
AND SERVED HIS SUMMONS.

I AM BEWILDERED. WHAT
DOES THE COURT SUSPECT?
IS IT BECAUSE ARYAKA
ESCAPED IN MY CARRIAGE?

WELL,
I SHALL
SOON
KNOW

COME, LEAD ME
TO THE
COURTROOM

AT THE COURT THE MOMENT CHARUDATTA HEARD THE CHARGES READ OUT, HE LOST ALL INTEREST IN THE CASE.



MAITREYA, ON HIS WAY TO VASANTASENA'S HOUSE, HEARD THE NEWS ABOUT CHARUDATTA FACING A TRIAL FOR MURDER.



AS THE CASE PROCEEDED, MAITREYA BURST INTO THE COURTROOM.

WHO IS THIS SCOUNDREL? HE HAS NO RIGHT TO DISTURB THE PROCEEDINGS.



IN THE SCUFFLE THAT FOLLOWED, VASANTASENA'S JEWELS ROLLED OUT OF MATREYA'S ROBES. THE COURT WAS SHOCKED.

LOOK! THE WOMAN'S JEWELS. THE MOTIVE FOR THE MURDER. THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THE GUILT OF THE ACCUSED!

HE IS A BRAHMAN. I CANNOT SENTENCE HIM TO DEATH. LET THE KING DECIDE.

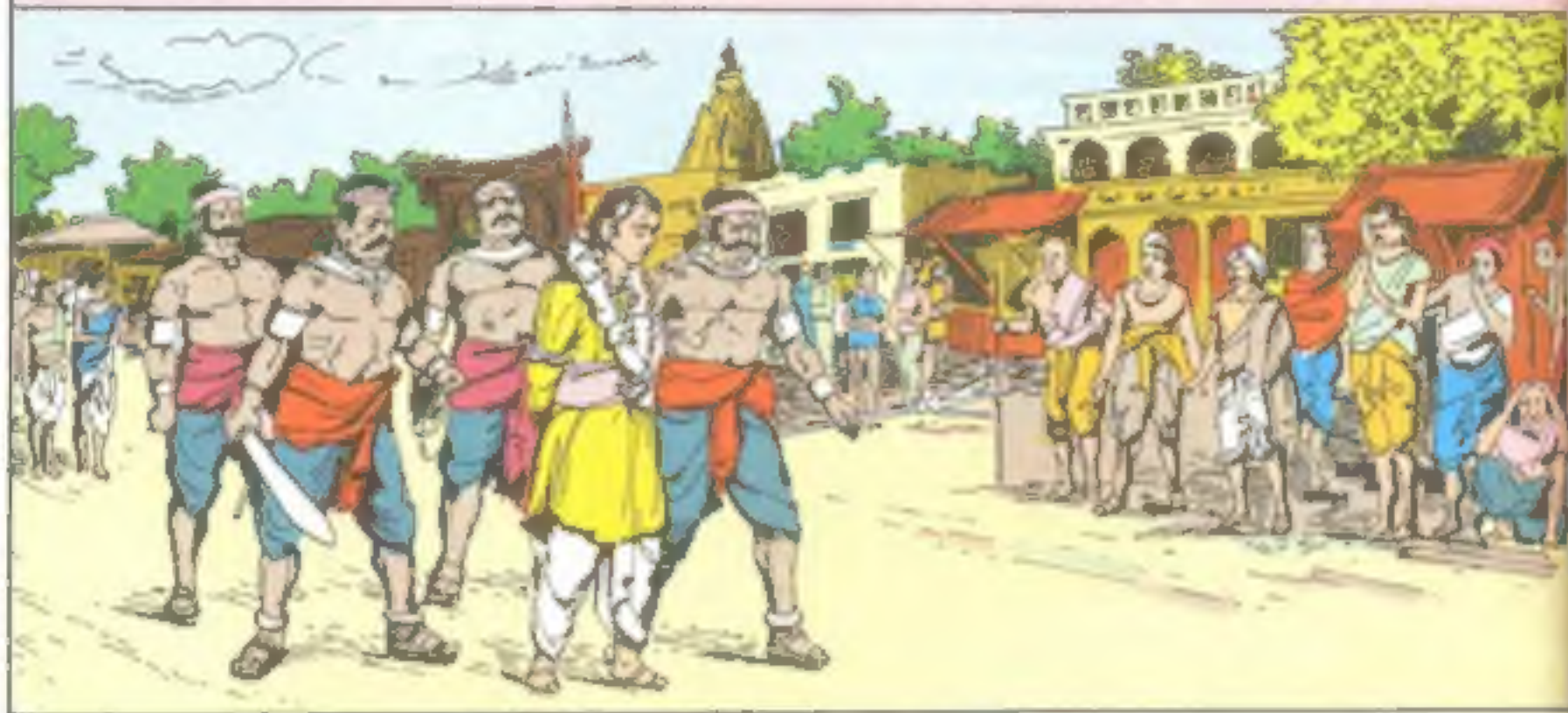


THE MESSENGER WHO WAS SENT TO THE KING SOON RETURNED. THE JUDGE READ OUT THE SENTENCE.

THE KING HAS DECIDED THAT YOU SHOULD BE EXECUTED WITH THE STOLEN JEWELS AROUND YOUR NECK.



AND SO CHARUDATTA WAS LED THROUGH THE STREETS, TILL THEY NEARED THE EXECUTION GROUNDS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TOWN.



MEANWHILE THE MONK AND VASANTASENA, NOW FULLY REVIVED, WERE RETURNING TO THE TOWN.

WHAT A LARGE CROWD!
WHAT A COMMOTION!
WHAT CAN THE MATTER BE?



THE MONK SUDDENLY STOOD STILL.

GOOD LORD! THEY SAY
CHARUDATTA IS GOING
TO BE EXECUTED FOR
MURDERING YOU.

OH! WRETCH
THAT I AM.
QUICK! QUICK!
LEAD ME TO HIM!



AS THE EXECUTIONERS
WERE GETTING READY-

VASANTASENA, DEAD OR ALIVE, YOU WILL
ONE DAY PROVE MY INNOCENCE. VIRTUE
WILL TRIUMPH OVER EVIL.



AS IF IN REPLY TO HIS APPEAL -

STOP! STOP! I AM
ALIVE. CHARUDATTA
MUST NOT BE
EXECUTED! HE IS
INNOCENT.

AMAZING!

VASANTASENA
ALIVE!

STRANGE

CHARUDATTA COULD NOT
BELIEVE HIS EYES.

YES,
CHARUDATTA!
IT IS I,
VASANTASENA,
VERY MUCH
ALIVE!

THEN VASANTASENA TURNED TO THE
CROWD.

HEAR, ALL OF YOU. IT WAS
THE EVIL SAMSTHANAKA
WHO TRIED TO MURDER
ME!

AT THAT MOMENT -

THERE COMES THE SCOUNDREL
TO SEE IF HIS EVIL PLANS
HAVE SUCCEEDED! KILL HIM!

NO, I BEG YOU, PLEASE
SPARE HIS LIFE. THE PUNISH-
MENT HE NEEDS IS
KINDNESS.

A MAN PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD. IT WAS SHARVILAKA.

I HAVE SLAIN PALAKA. ARYAKA IS NOW OUR KING.

AH! THAT'S VERY GOOD NEWS.



KING ARYAKA HAS NAMED YOU VICEROY OF KUSHAVATI. HE HAS ALSO CONFERRED UPON NOBLE VASANTASENA THE STATUS OF "SECOND WIFE TO CHARUDATTA".

WIFE TO CHARUDATTA! AH HOW SWEET THE WORDS SOUND.



CHARUDATTA LED VASANTASENA TO HIS WIFE WHO WELCOMED THE TALENTED YOUNG DANCER.

MAITREYA HAS GIVEN US THE GOOD NEWS. WELCOME, LITTLE SISTER. YOU HAVE BROUGHT GOOD FORTUNE TO OUR HUSBAND AND HIS HOUSEHOLD.

I MUST HASTEN TO MADANIKA, WHO MUST BE ANXIOUSLY WAITING FOR ME.

